

**Superintendents and Technology Coordinators:**

ADE is assisting elected officials as they seek the best way to expand high speed Internet access to Arkansas students. School districts have played a crucial role in these efforts by participating in data collection, for which we are very thankful. To continue building on what has been learned, ADE is gathering further information that will form a framework for what a new K-12 network could look like.

As you may know, ADE issued a Request For Proposals (RFP) for expanding broadband connectivity to Arkansas's public schools through a new network that could be phased in over the next three to five years. This process could include eliminating the need for districts to supplement APSCN connectivity. ADE is expecting proposals from vendors by January 16th.

To add value to the information those proposals will contain, ADE is reaching out to "phase one" districts, as identified in the RFP. This includes districts without a contract for Internet access from a private provider. This also includes districts with provider contracts that expire in 2015 or 2016. Over the next several weeks, ADE will contact these districts to answer any questions about the network design contained in the RFP. All "phase two" districts, with contracts that expire beyond 2016, are also encouraged to share any questions or comments about the process with ADE during this period. In the meantime, each district is advised to seek bids for connectivity just as it has in the past and to proceed with normal E-rate procedures for 2015-16.

The network design contained in the RFP would see the state 1) redirect the ~\$11M it currently spends on APSCN to new network connections, and 2) purchase Internet access for districts opting into the network. This, in turn, would allow districts opting into the network to redirect their own funds that are currently being used to supplement APSCN. Districts opting in would be asked to focus on improving connectivity by procuring a MAN (Metropolitan Area Network) to connect each campus within the district and by improving internal connections. Many districts already have a MAN in place. Where needed, MANs would be paid for with district funds as in past years. ADE would provide technical assistance to districts to procure either a physical or virtual MAN that would connect to a regional Internet hub.

**The Department needs to determine your district's response to the following questions:**

**Yes    No**

- ☐    ☐    **Would your district benefit from joining a more robust, state-procured network, with monthly transport to a district demarcation point and Internet access paid for by the state?**

**If "No," please note why:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes    No**

- ☐    ☐    **Would your district benefit from the ability to purchase internal connections equipment (WAPs, LANs, etc.) from a state contract?**

**If "No," please note why:** \_\_\_\_\_

Your responses will be used to provide valuable context to the information contained in the proposals from vendors. This is strictly an effort to gather information, and your district should seek bids for connectivity just as it has in the past and proceed with normal E-rate procedures for 2015-16.

Once your responses have been marked above, the signature of the district superintendent is requested on the space provided:

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Superintendent

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School District Name

Completed and signed documents can be submitted via e-mail to [cory.biggs@arkansas.gov](mailto:cory.biggs@arkansas.gov) or by mail at:

Arkansas Department of Education  
c/o Cory Biggs  
Four Capitol Mall  
Room 401A  
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Sincerely,



Cory Biggs  
ADE Coordinator of Special Projects